

THE RED DWARF

By J. O. FAGAN

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On a sultry morning in the summer time, quite a number of years ago, long lines of Swazi Kaffirs, in full war dress, were making their way homeward up the Crocodile valley, which is in the Leydenburg district of the Transvaal.

They were returning from a successful expedition against their hereditary enemies, the Macatees, and were driving their booty before them.

This consisted of cattle and women. Indeed, the only male creature among the prisoners was a little red dwarf, who had been captured in one of the caves, together with the wives of the chief whose stronghold they had been storming. The little fellow had probably been brought down country as a present from some kaffir king in the far interior.

The dwarf was a trifle under four feet in height, but his body was thickset and muscular, and his well-shaped head betokened considerable intelligence and sagacity.

About this time, white men and kaffirs all over the continent were being electrified by the magic word Diamonds. Its significance to everybody was very much the same. To this white man it meant a chance for independence and luxury, while to the kaffir it held up a vision of marvelous blankets, tons of beads, and numerous wives.

One day a party of Swazi "boys," as they were termed, set out for the diamond fields, and the dwarf was persuaded to accompany them. After a long and tedious tramp they arrived at Kimberley, where the party disbanded, each individual getting work where he could. The dwarf was something of a curiosity, even in Kimberley, and he quickly secured employment on one of the claims. At that time and place diamond stealing was a profession, and I. D. Bism—illicit diamond buying—was almost unrestrained. But between the miners and the I. D. B. there was war to the knife, and the unlucky kaffir who was caught with a diamond in his possession was frequently given a "short shrift" or an unmerciful flogging, on the quiet.

On account of the dwarf's cleverness he was soon promoted to a position in one of the searching rooms. Under the eye of an overseer, it became his business to search the clothing of the natives, and to examine and tap their nabel bodies for concealed diamonds. In this department there was an enormous Zulu policeman named Dingaan. The management had implicit faith in his honesty, and so Dingaan took advantage of his position to treat the natives with uncalculated severity. Even the little dwarf attracted his officious attention, and one day he accused him of stealing a diamond.

The dwarf was forthwith dragged into the presence of the search committee, where his mouth, his hair, his toes and his armpits were subjected to a rigid examination.

However, the search from beginning to end having proved fruitless, the dwarf was about to regain his liberty, when Dingaan insisted that the sneezing test should be applied to him. Accordingly a fine, peppery compound was injected into the dwarf's nostrils, causing a violent fit of sneezing and coughing. During the operation, the Zulu managed, by sleight of hand, to produce a small diamond, which he insisted had been coughed up by his victim. This evidence was considered sufficient, and so the dwarf was immediately treated to an unmerciful flogging and driven off the premises.

For several weeks he remained an outcast even from the company of the kaffirs on account of the position he had held in the searching room. He took his punishment very much to heart and presented a very forlorn appearance, wandering around from one claim to another, begging for assistance and sympathy.

Finally, a Mr. Meyer, a diamond merchant, made some inquiries in regard to him, and the result of his investigation was a most curious and interesting revelation. One morning Mr. Meyer took the dwarf over to the office of the mining company where he had received his punishment, and after some

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preliminary conversation, he requested the overseer to display before the dwarf a tray of diamonds. As soon as the little fellow's eyes fell upon the stones, his body quivered, and he began to sneeze violently. "You perceive," said Mr. Meyer to the overseer, "the effect of the flogging and the sneezing compound upon the sensitive organization of the little dwarf. Fright, you understand, plays strange freaks with people, and I am now about to show you a remarkable illustration of the fact. This abnormal delicacy of feeling in relation to diamonds is not confined to his eyesight. With the assistance of his hands as the medium of perception, the dwarf has become endowed with a kind of divination, perhaps mind-reading, by means of which he becomes instinctively aware of the presence of diamonds, particularly when concealed in the body of a kaffir, over which he is permitted to pass his hands.

"This curious state of affairs I have discovered by repeated experiments, and perhaps the final fact in regard to the case is the most remarkable. When the dwarf locates a diamond, or persuades himself that he has located one, a fit of sneezing immediately follows. Very likely you now begin to perceive the commercial value of this dwarf to a mine owner. Now, just for an illustration, I wish you would bring in a few of the natives, and let us see if I can prove my story to your satisfaction."

Accordingly, after blind-folding the dwarf, the overseer arranged five or six of his kaffirs in a row. The dwarf, standing on a chair, was drawn along the line from one kaffir to another. He passed his long, delicately formed fingers up and down the bodies of three of them without making any sign. The fourth man in the line was the Zulu policeman. The dwarf had no sooner placed his hands on his bare chest than he received something in the nature of a shock. Then the little fellow's shoulders began to heave, and his muscles to contract, and a sneeze after sneeze followed in rapid succession.

The overseer, while dumfounded at this unexpected denouement, was not so easily to be convinced of the



After Blindfolding the Dwarf.

treachery of his pet policeman, and insisted upon repeating the experiment, with added precautions. The result was exactly the same.

So they concluded to search the Zulu in the usual way. This aroused his indignation, and so, more on account of his impertinence than of any proof of his guilt, they placed him in confinement. During the following night he eluded his guards, stole a horse from a nearby stable, and made good his escape.

When the ignorant kaffirs in the mines heard the story they were panic-stricken. The report spread

among them that all natives would have to submit to the sneezing test. A good-sized riot was immediately threatened, and serious trouble was only avoided by the prompt display of the following quaint, yet comprehensive announcement:

"Diamonds are not to be sneezed at."

However, the sneezing test was held in reserve, and in this way diamond stealing and the I. D. B. received a check from which it took them a long time to recover.

The fame of the red dwarf spread far and wide, and he quickly became, and indeed still remains, one of the most interesting individuals in the mining community. He took the name of Cecil Meyer from two of his benefactors.

Press Clippings.

Jamesport Gazette; A young lady of our acquaintance wants to know why men always hug around the waist while women hug around the neck. But we want to know how on earth a Jamesport girl should know any thing about the first part of her statement. Her cheeks turned quite red when we inquired.

An exchange says that a man with two sons gave each a dollar at the beginning of the week. He charged upon them the necessity of thrift and the wisdom of careful investment, and intimated that the son who showed the greatest increase in his working capital at the end of the week would receive still greater favors. On Saturday night the father called for an accounting and asked John how much he had increased his capital. "I increased it a dollar," John replied, "and I now have two dollars." "That is certainly fine," said the father. "You will be a rich man some day, John." "And how," said he, turning to the other son, "did you come out, George?" How much did you increase your dollar?" "I lost my dollar father," George replied somewhat faintly. "Why you miserable spendthrift," roared his father, "what did you do with the good money I gave you?" "Well," replied George, "I lost it matching with John."

The Columbia, Missouri, Herald gives this recipe for getting rid of rats and mice. Sprinkle powdered concentrated lye liberally in their runs about twice a year. They frequent moist places under floors and their feet are almost always moist. The lye causes their feet to burn, then they lick their feet, causing more burns. Then they immediately emigrate. The paper also repeats the advice about sprinkling a little pulverized sulphur through the corn as it is being cribbed. The sulphur will not affect the corn in the least even for meal, but it will keep the rats and mice out of it.

The Cass County Democrat says the following incident actually occurred in Harrisonville; A citizen inclined to be wet sent to a brewery for a case of beer and instructed the brewer to label it books. It arrived all right and the man received this notice from the express company. "Dear Sir, Your box of books is leaking. Come in and get it."

Putnam Co. Journal; One of the best and brightest things we can

give is kind words. They have been likened to the bright flowers of earth's existence. Use them everywhere; especially around the fireside; they made a paradise out of a hotel. Nothing can heal a wounded heart or cheer a crushed spirit like kind words. Let us not be so careful how we use them for they are the greatest blessings earth can give.

Forreston Journal: Sometimes a woman will spend so much time making pretty clothes for her children that she has no time to teach them their prayers.

Stanberry Herald: The child who has a smile for every one except the old "Dad" or "Mam" who has grown gray, hump backed and wrinkled working to feed, clothe and educate them, have not the make up that it takes to make good citizens. They are the worst class of ingrates.

Breckenridge Bulletin: The poorest policy and the worst economy is to keep the children out of school. Every day lost has its manifold effect; the knowledge gained on that day is missed, pupil is thrown behind, becomes discouraged, has a bad effect on the class, and the very habit is to be avoided.

Mound City Jeffersonian: The best man noticed that one of the wedding guests, a gloomy looking young man, did not seem to be enjoying himself. He was wondering about as if he had lost his last friend. The b. m. took it upon himself to cheer him up. "Have you kissed the bride?" he asked by way of introduction. "Not lately," replied the gloomy one with a faraway expression.

Eight Points of the Law.

A correspondent signing himself "So-and-so" overheard some men, evidently lawyers, talking over a case recently when some such expression as this reached his ears:

"Well, he couldn't help winning. He had the eight points of the law in his favor.

The correspondent asks to be enlightened on the subject. The eight points of the law, "So-and-so," are these: First, a good cause; second, a good purse; third, an honest and skillful solicitor; fourth, good evidence; fifth, able counsel; sixth, an upright judge; seventh, an intelligent jury; eighth, good luck.

If you have all these in your favor you have a sporting chance of winning your case.—London Standard.

New Two-passenger Record.

Lemans, Sept. 28.—Wilbur Wright, the American aeroplaneist, made three successful flights this evening. On the first flight he was unaccompanied, and remained in the air for one hour, seven minutes, eleven and four-fifths seconds, covering a distance of about thirty miles.

On the second flight he was accompanied by the aeroplaneist, Tissandier, and he succeeded in beating the record for flight with a passenger by remaining up eleven minutes, three and two-fifths seconds. His previous flight with a passenger was made on Friday last, when he remained in the air nine minutes, thirteen and one-fifth seconds at a height of fifty feet.

Count de Lambert was his passenger on the third trip today, when he covered about three and a half miles in six minutes and fifteen seconds.

His Steady Occupation.

One side of the question, "How the other half lives," is illuminated by a little conversation taken from the London Chronicle. The profession here described is, doubtless, a large one, and appeals to the temper of many members of the slum world.

A lady philanthropist was applied to for charity by a well-

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dressed woman.

"Are you married?" was the question.

"Yes."

"What is your husband?"

"Out o' work."

"But what is he when he is in work?" asked the philanthropist.

"You don't understand, miss," was the reply. "He's a regular out-o'-worker."

Too Dangerous.

Old Aunt Hepsy Garside never had seen a moving-picture show before. She gazed in speechless wonder at the magic contrivance by which messenger boys were made to move with breakneck speed, barbers to shave their customers in less than a minute, and heavy policemen to dash along

the street at a rate never attained by a living specimen, either on or off duty.

It was all real to her. She could not doubt the evidence of her sense. All those things were taking place exactly as depicted.

Presently an automobile came in sight in the far background, moving directly toward the audience at the rate of at least a mile a minute. Just as a catastrophe seemed inevitable, it swerved aside, passed on, and disappeared.

Aunt Hepsy could stand it no longer. Hastily grasping the hand of her little niece, she rose and started swiftly for the door. "Come along Minerva!" she said. "It ain't safe to stay here any longer! That thing didn't miss me more than two feet!"

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